

# EDITORIAL NOTES

There are authors in the music world who act like gravitation wells, like lost and faraway stars whose light seems to have all but disappeared from today's skies. Back in 2009, when I wrote my Bachelor of Arts in Music thesis on the *Concerto Brillant*, op. 10, by Friedrich August **Kummer** (1797—1879), I stated that he was a lost star whose gravity effect on the stars around is all we have left. Fast-forward to today, I stand by my assertion, but with a much clearer picture of what a galaxy of wonder the *Dresden Cello School* has been.

The most influential figure of this stunning generation of cellists, almost an unaware forefather, is, undoubtedly, Bernhard **Romberg** (1767—1841). He was a traveling concert performer, never in the same place for too much time, so much was he sought after by audiences throughout Europe. Romberg's production of pieces for cello is extremely generous, and his cello method is one of the best sources of pedagogical insight one could ask for. He never created his own school, though, due to his performing career. Instead, he had cellists from all over Europe come to him for a lesson or two when he was available between concerts. Both **Dotzauer** (1783—1860) and Kummer took lessons with Romberg, with Kummer later pursuing his studies with Dotzauer when Dotzauer became first solo cellist in the *Dresden Court Orchestra* in 1811.

Kummer joined the orchestra in 1814, but not as a cellist, rather as an oboist, which was his first instrument—and the instrument of his father. The conductor of this orchestra was Carl Maria von **Weber** (1786—1826), who immediately recognised the talent of the young Kummer and appointed him as section cellist as soon as a place became available. He would go on to play with this orchestra until 1864 when, during the celebrations for his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the orchestra, he announced his retirement. He had succeeded his teacher, Dotzauer, in the role of first solo cellist, in 1850. For the last 15 years of his life, he taught at the *Hochschule für Musik* in Dresden, founded by C. M. von Weber and Richard **Wagner** in 1856.

Kummer's musical production is very different from Dotzauer's. While they both worked in the same orchestra, which focused on opera repertoire, Kummer

was the more influenced of the two by what was happening around him. Almost every composition by Kummer is very lyrical in nature, with an astonishing number of pieces being in the form of variations, fantasies, potpourris on operatic themes. Apart from the excellent method with 92 exercises for two cellos as an appendix, Op. 60, few pedagogical works were created. The most notable are the *Three Duets*, Op. 22, and the *Eight Grand Studies*, Op. 44, the last of which constitutes the object of the present edition. Over the coming years, you can expect a complete republishing of Kummer and Romberg compositions alongside Dotzauer's.

The origin of this edition

When, as a cello student, I completed the 21 Studies by Jean-Louis **Dupont**, my teacher proposed I practice these eight studies by Friedrich A. Kummer, a composer who was, until then, unknown to me, but who would shape my future in unfathomable ways. I was given a copy of the cello part from the Constallat & C. edition (plate no. 3008), edited by the then Paris Conservatory professor Jules **Loeb** (1852—1933). Never was I told that a second cello part had been planned by the composer.

Many years later, I managed to come across a copy of the Ricordi edition compiled by Giuseppe **Magrini** (1857—1926), historic cello professor of the Milan Conservatory and first solo cello of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan under the baton of Giuseppe **Verdi** and Arturo **Toscanini**. That was the first time when I discovered that these studies had a second cello part. What surprised me was how much an edition of these pieces was sought after by Italian Conservatory professors, and, at the same time, how inaccessible the existing sources were. During the summer of 2022 my partner was tasked with inputting all notes and symbols and, during the month of November, I plunged into the engraving of the different sources.

While it was good enough to have a new edition of the Magrini revision and a comparative source with the Loeb revision, my goal was to find the original by Kummer himself. With a true stroke of luck<sup>1</sup>, I was able to find a copy of the first edition of these studies, published by the Berlin-based editor *Adolphe Fürstner*, described as "*Editeur de Musique de la Cour Royale de Saxe*". On

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of the Luigi Silva Cello Music Collection, SC01.1, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections & University Archives, University Libraries, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

this copy, I found that these studies were composed and dedicated to “*Monsieur Auguste Franchomme, Violoncelle Solo de l’Opera Italien à Paris et Premier Violoncelle de la Chamber du Roi des Français*”. Below, the composer was marked as “*F. A. Kummer, Premier Violoncelle de S. M. Le Roi de Saxe*”. This gives us a hint towards when these pieces may have been composed and, thus, published: since Kummer became first solo cello of the Dresden Court Orchestra in 1850, aged 53, he must have composed Op. 44 between 1850 and 1864, the year of his retirement. This makes sense because his cello method, Op. 60, may have been composed during the 15 years he spent as conservatory professor. On the cover, it was clearly marked that these pieces may have been accompanied by a second cello, with “*ad libitum*” marked in square brackets and in smaller typeface. This was a sign that Kummer gave the cellist the chance of performing these as solo cello pieces, but neatly expressed his preference for the chamber music version. Indeed, these pieces have no bars where the first cello rests, something that, instead, happens in Dotzauer pedagogical duets.

## Building a modern edition

Having to manage three sources and, thus, to create three different editions, was a demanding task, even if all musical material should have been the same. Sadly, the three sources contained enough differences to oblige me to create three separate versions. Besides, a full score of these pieces had never been realised before. This brought to the surface many issues of tempo marking placement coherence, of double barlines appearing in one place in one part and in another place in the other. Fingering and bowing suggestions are often different between sources, and after playing through all the versions, one is forced to ask oneself why certain changes were made. Had I been given access to the original score during my student years, I would have certainly benefited immensely from Kummer’s own suggestions. The present modern edition address all this and every difference is described in detail in the critical notes at the end of each version.

## What is in this Edition

This edition will come, as usual, as an Urtext first, alternative sources second. The Urtext will contain a score and set of parts of Kummer’s original edition and

will be the only version that goes to print. The *Collectors’ Edition*, instead, will be available only digitally and will contain a score and set of parts of Magrini’s revision and the cello part of Loeb’s revision, since nothing more survived of it. The print version will be processed by a dedicated music printer in Germany and shipped from one of our distributors. The digital version will be offered as professional Press Quality PDFs.

This edition inaugurates a new series of publications dedicated to *The Dresden Cello School*, and will also be the first one to show the newly designed cover, redrawn from scratch to celebrate the start of the printing and distributing of our scores.

## The Huit Grandes Études, Op. 44, in detail

These studies are not easy, and are advised for students who have already practiced their thumb position to a certain degree of ease. All of them cover the full range of the cello. In Italy, they are usually tackled after the Duport Studies and before Popper High School, op. 73.

Starting from musical form, we have:

- ©: *Rondo form*: no. 1
- ©: *Study form* (this is a form used when the technical difficulty is repeated throughout the piece): nos. 2, 8
- ©: *Simple ternary form*: nos. 3, 4, 5, 6
- ©: *Binary form*: no. 7

As you can see, compared to Dotzauer studies, we have almost a poverty of forms, possibly dictated by the technical difficulties that Kummer wanted to focus on. The dominance of the simple ternary form (A-B-A plus a Coda, 50%) is typical in studies collections of a more demanding level.

Looking at key signatures, we get the following results:

- ©: *A minor*: no. 1
- ©: *D major*: nos. 2, 5, 8
- ©: *G minor*: no. 3
- ©: *B minor*: no. 4
- ©: *F major*: no. 6
- ©: *C minor*: no. 7

D major is the absolute winner, with three studies, or 38% of the total, while all other keys receive only one entry. It is interesting to notice that minor and major

keys are equally distributed, with major getting three Ds and one F, and minor getting A, B, C, and G. None of the studies goes beyond three accidentals in the key signature.

Finally, we look at meter, to see how it was distributed:

©:  $\frac{2}{4}$ : no. 1

©:  $\frac{3}{8}$ : no. 2

©:  $\frac{4}{4}$ : nos. 3, 5, 7 (with  $\frac{1}{16}$  upbeat), 8 (with  $\frac{1}{4}$  upbeat)

©:  $\frac{6}{8}$ : no. 4 (with  $\frac{1}{8}$  upbeat)

©:  $\frac{3}{4}$ : no. 6

This ends up with simple quaternary taking the sceptre, with one half of the total entries.

My suggested practicing order is as follows: no. 3, 4, 8, 5, 7, 1, 6, 2. This is not a fixed-in-place imposition, rather a mild recommendation to give your students the best learning experience available.

Let's now take a brief look at each of the twelve pieces.

**No. 1 in A minor.** The collection opens with a very challenging piece in A minor, where the main cello constantly plays in 32<sup>nd</sup> notes. Kummer specifies metronome markings, something that his teacher, Dotzauer, didn't do. The device itself was invented in 1815, so should have been available to both, making this a clear choice of the composer and a curious generational evolution between master and apprentice. Bow technique is equally demanding, as few bars are spared abrupt bow-speed changes. The light character of the piece makes it ideal when played in the two upper thirds of the bow. The second cello accompanies in pizzicato.

**No. 2 in D major.** This is the first time I have seen the term "Allegrezza" as an agogic marking, and while Magrini changed this to the more usual "Allegretto", I have decided to keep it. The whole study repeats the same rhythm each bar, and is in thumb position most of the time. Usage of the 4<sup>th</sup> finger in thumb position is abundant as well, making this possibly the most challenging piece of the collection. Kummer recommends to play "la prima nota marcato", showing that the performer should emphasise the melodic line drawn by the first note of each bar. A few moments of respite are given where one can rest the thumb for a little while. The second cello accompaniment is light and simple.

**No. 3 in G minor.** This heavy-sounding piece is

probably the first one a student should tackle because, despite the apparent difficulty in bow management at the beginning, the proper position is recovered at the end of the second bar. This makes it a study where the full length of the bow is involved, in small chunks, and where finding the perfect spot is paramount for a relaxed and convincing way of playing. The first part doesn't go beyond the 7<sup>th</sup> position, while the second has a few uncomfortable passages in thumb position, including a few ottava harmonics whose notation has been modernised to make it clearer (bb. 32-5). The second cello part, while still in an accompaniment role, impart a richness of sound and harmony to the whole piece that would be sorely missed were it not there.

**No. 4 in B minor.** This study is placed as number 1 in Magrini's collection, with numbers 1-3 shifting forward to make room for it. In the original source this is printed at the front, while retaining its original numbering, to help with page turns. I can confirm that having this piece as the first one leads to better page turns, but the most problematic ones are, in any case, nos. 5 & 6 so there was no real point to alter the composer's original intention.

The piece has to be played on the second string throughout, which is a fantastic exercise for the angle of the left upper arm, and to get a relaxed left shoulder in the higher positions. A wiggly sign is added on certain notes by Kummer. Magrini footnotes it with a "tremolo della mano sinistra" or "left-hand tremolo" which could only mean a recommendation for vibrato. Strangely enough, Loeb's revision takes away this sign without comments. The second cello part is much more involved than in previous studies.

**No. 5 in D major.** This is the only study in the collection where playing with the second cello is fundamental, since the main cello part is just an arpeggiated chordal accompaniment to the melody played by its partner. The main part is in 16<sup>th</sup>-note sextuplets throughout, and no starting bow direction is recommended in the original. Starting up-bow seems to be the wisest choice, but starting down-bow is not impossible and has its advantages as well.

**No. 6 in F major.** Kummer even titles this piece "Study for the thumb" and it is only slightly simpler to practice and play than no. 2. While that study focused on the octave position and heavily employed the 3<sup>rd</sup>

and 4<sup>th</sup> fingers, this study focuses on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> fingers, and on their creation of intervals of a sixth and of a seventh with the thumb. It goes very high on the first string, but it also explores uncharted territories on the III and IV strings. The second cello part acts as a helpful metronome and harmonic grounding to the main cello.

**No. 7 in C minor.** The bigger brother of no. 4, this study is to be played on the III string throughout. In this piece more than in any other of the collection, we can feel the influence of opera over Kummer. The theme of the *Lento, appassionato* is taken from Gioacchino **Rossini's** (1792—1868) *Mosè in Egitto* (composed in 1818) and, more precisely, from the aria "*Dal tuo stellato soglio*" (Act IV, Scene III). The way Kummer creates a melody over the G-string is simply masterful, and the second part, marked *Allegro furioso*, leaves the listener speechless and open-mouthed.

This piece holds a special place in my heart because I performed it at the entrance exam to the Conservatory in Cuneo, back in 2006, albeit from Loeb's edition, since I had access to no other. As you will see in the Critical Notes, this study was the one which was more heavily altered by Loeb's revision.

The second cello has, this time, a very involved role, and should be played with the utmost care.

**No. 8 in D major.** No cello-studies collection could ever be considered complete without a piece dedicated to playing at the tip of the bow. In a way, this could be considered the little brother of **Piatti's** Capriccio No. 1, even if only pedagogically speaking, since those caprices were written and published after Kummer resigned from his solo cello position (1868—1874). This study practices the continuous alternating of D and A strings, starting up-bow in the first part, then down-bow in the second. The second cello part is a delicate and beautiful counter-chant to the melody played on the D string by the main cello.

## Editorial annotations

There was only one note that was clearly missing a natural sign, in study no. 3, bar 20: that has been added in square bracket. The only slur clearly missing in the original, no. 4, bar 11, was added in dashed style. All other changes and relevant annotations are listed at the end, in the Critical Notes. There are several changes in the two revisions but, sadly, most of them take away more than what they add to the original music.

Nevertheless, they offer an interesting glimpse at how cello playing and teaching was evolving already in the generation after the composer's one.

## Conclusions

The deepest thanks go to my partner, Vanja, for supporting me every day in this project and, since this summer, actively participating in it. I hope you will enjoy playing the first entry in this new series dedicated to the masters of the *Dresden Cello School*. Many more are coming.

The Editor

Michele Galvagno

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